



ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

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IN THIS ISSUE

- 3** KBE lauds governor's spending plan
- 3** LAC takes learning outside the classroom
- 4** From literacy to learning: NCFL changes name, expands initiatives
- 4** Students (and parents) get active with 'Let's Move!'



Nearly half of the 2013-14 kindergarteners are ready to succeed in Kentucky schools

Gov. Steve Beshear announced last week that 49 percent of students started kindergarten this school year ready to learn and succeed. However, nearly 26,000 students entered school unprepared for kindergarten work.

"From day one, these students may be at a disadvantage; they are behind, and some lack the foundational skills on which to build," Beshear said. "Too often, they don't catch up with their peers. As a result, these students may face years of poor grades and negative school experiences that usually only end when they drop out or graduate from high school unprepared for college or career."

The governor announced results of the first statewide implementation of the common Kindergarten Readiness Screener at a news conference with Education Commissioner Terry Holliday and Terry Tolan, executive director of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood (KYGOEC).

Teachers administered the BRIGANCE K Screener to 50,532 kindergarten students in all 173 school districts at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year. The screener measures how well a child is prepared to succeed at the time the screener is administered. Students are asked their name and age, to recite the alphabet and count to 30, among other tasks.

See **SCREENER**, Page 2

DID YOU KNOW?

Wednesday, Feb. 5, is Digital Learning Day. [Click here](#) to see how Kentucky students are celebrating.

SCREENER, from Page 1**Kindergarten readiness by student group**

Group	Enrollment	Tested	Not Ready	Ready
All students	51,556	50,532	51 percent	49 percent
Male	26,254	25,707	56.4 percent	43.6 percent
Female	25,302	24,825	45.5 percent	54.5 percent
White (non-Hispanic)	39,493	38,735	48.8 percent	51.2 percent
African American	5,299	5,196	55.8 percent	44.2 percent
Hispanic	3,685	3,595	72 percent	28 percent
Asian	754	731	38.4 percent	61.6 percent
American Indian/Alaska Native	66	63	50.8 percent	49.2 percent
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	70	70	48.6 percent	51.4 percent
Two or more races	2,188	2,141	49.5 percent	50.5 percent
Limited English proficiency	2,968	2,890	73.9 percent	26.1 percent
Free/reduced-price meals	31,788	31,145	62.4 percent	37.6 percent
Students with disabilities	6,605	6,405	71.8 percent	28.2 percent

Students can belong to more than one group.

The common kindergarten screener, as outlined in [704 KAR 5:070](#), provides teachers with key information early in the school year that they can use to guide instruction to meet the individual needs of all students. The screener is aligned with both Kentucky's school readiness key definition and Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards.

"This data will help us prevent and close achievement gaps before they become insurmountable," Holliday said. "It will not only help kindergarten teachers make sure they are providing the best instruction to meet individual student needs, but also will ensure our primary grades are building on a student's knowledge. Our goal is for every child to be reading on grade level or above by the time they leave the 3rd grade."

Holliday said countless research studies show that a student's ability to read and adequately comprehend by the time he or she exits primary school is a key indicator of a student's future educational success and whether he or she will graduate from high school college/career-ready.

As part of the kindergarten screener, parents also were asked to fill out a survey about what type of setting the child was in the year before starting kindergarten, along with several other things. The questionnaire did not distinguish whether the program was a half-day, full-day program or the duration a child spent in a particular setting.



The kindergarten readiness screener is just one tool among that can be used to strengthen communication and collaboration between all community members. Resources to support quality learning experiences are available for parents and for early care and education providers on the [Kentucky Department of Education](#) and the KYGOEC websites.

The kindergarten readiness screener data is available in the supplemental data section of KDE's [Open House](#) and will be added to the school report card in the fall.

To learn more about the common kindergarten screener or to view an early childhood data profile on your area, visit the KYGOEC's website at <http://kidsnow.ky.gov>.

KBE lauds governor's spending plan

Members of the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) commend Gov. Steve Beshear for his courage and wisdom in making education the top priority in his 2014-16 proposed budget.

"The governor had to make some really hard choices, many at the expense of other state agencies," KBE Chairman Roger Marcum said. "The state board and I are extremely appreciative that the governor saw the need to fund education at a higher level than in the previous few years."



Roger Marcum

Marcum said the state board is thankful for both Beshear's and Education Commissioner Terry Holliday's leadership on behalf of Kentucky students.

The Kentucky Board of Education had made the restoration of P-12 funding to pre-recession levels, or greater, its primary goal for this legislative session.

In its 2014-16 biennial budget request, the board asked for the:

- restoration of Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funding to 2009 levels
- restoration of Flexible Focus Funds for professional development, safe schools, extended school services, textbooks and preschool to 2008 levels
- technology funding to increase bandwidth and pay back a bond that would support district replacement of computers and/or mobile devices with up-to-date instructional devices

"The governor heard our plea and the plea of teachers, administrators and school boards across the commonwealth," Marcum said.

The Kentucky Board of Education plans to formally thank Beshear for his support in a letter signed by each member when it meets in regular session on Feb. 5.

"In recent years, much more of the burden of funding schools has fallen on local taxpayers, which has created an inequity among our schools," Marcum said. "That's the very thing that the Kentucky Education Reform Act addressed nearly a quarter century ago. And we do not want history to repeat itself."

In addition to KBE's request for SEEK, flex focus and technology funding, Beshear's budget request also included a total 3 percent pay hike for certified and classified personnel over the next two years – a raise Marcum and KBE said is well deserved.

"Increasingly, teachers have been reaching into their own pockets to pay for materials they need in the classroom. Combined with inflation, higher health care costs, and no pay raises in recent years - they have been losing ground financially at a time we've asked them to do more to raise achievement and meet the directives of Senate Bill 1," Marcum said. "The issue should never be what we are going to cut to fund education. If that's the case, lawmakers need to take a hard look at increasing revenues, either through expanded gaming, tax reform or both. Unfortunately, our young people can't wait until the state coffers are full.

"Education is the key to our children's and Kentucky's future," Marcum added. "By reinvesting in education now, we will see dividends for years to come. We've come too far and made too much progress to turn back now."

LAC takes learning outside of the classroom

Life Adventure Center (LAC) is an educational nonprofit located in Versailles that uses hands-on learning in a natural setting.

Staff members at the center believe students of all ages learn best by doing. Life Adventure Center has several options including a 575-acre working farm and woods; high- and low-challenge course for team building; equestrian facilities; an outdoor adventure program; and environmental education programs at Buckley Wildlife Sanctuary.

All LAC programing aligns with the Kentucky Core Academic Standards.

For more information on how LAC can provide an educational field trip for students, have your child's teacher check out its website at www.lifeadventurecenter.org or contact [Chris Howard](#) at (859) 879-3122.

'ParentInfo' signup

[Click here](#) to sign up to receive this newsletter twice a month.

For more information, contact [Susan Riddell](#) at (502) 564-2000.



Students (and parents) get active with 'Let's Move!'

More Kentucky students are kicking their sedentary habits and getting active thanks to the "Let's Move!" Active Schools initiative.

The physical education program empowers teachers, principals, administrators and parents to create active environments that enable all students to get moving; helps promote physical activity before, during and after school; and encourages parent and community involvement in helping students become healthier.

"The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is committed to improving the health and wellness of Kentucky's students," Education Commissioner Terry Holliday said. "'Let's Move!' helps schools create active environments that get students moving every day and supports their success in school."

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, students need at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity. Since young people spend an average of six to seven hours in school each day, the school environment is an ideal place to help students achieve the recommended amount of physical activity. Studies show that students who participate in regular physical activity also perform better in school.

Schools in nearly 50 Kentucky school districts have signed up for the "Let's Move!" program.

"I would encourage other districts in the state to follow suit and bring 'Let's Move!' into their schools," said Jamie Sparks, director of KDE Coordinated School Health.

Schools can sign up at www.letsmoveschools.org and find information to help build a team and develop a plan. Free resources and tools including in-person trainings; program materials; activation grants; and direct, personal assistance from certified professionals, also are available.

For more information, visit www.letsmove.gov, or contact Sparks at jamie.sparks@education.ky.gov.

From literacy to learning: NCFL changes name, expands initiatives

The National Center for Family Literacy, based in Louisville and created as a nonprofit organization helping adults and children learn together, has a new name.

Now called The National Center for Families Learning (NCFL), the organization believes learning does not end with becoming literate and that lifelong learning is crucial for success, opportunity and economic prosperity.

"Literacy will always be a cornerstone of what we do," NCFL president and founder Sharon Darling said, "and this move to learning is about being more inclusive and strengthening ties with the families and communities we serve by bringing our mission to life in everyday language."

The concept of families learning over family learning plays a more active role in the mission of NCFL, Darling said, and the plurality of the new name is more inclusive with "families" representing society as a whole.

To that end, NCFL is encouraging parents to consider attending the Families Learning Summit Feb. 17-19, 2014, for a conference focused on learning and education for children and their families.

At the summit, held in Washington, D.C., participants will hear from children's advocate and actress Holly Robinson Peete; educational experts from the Smithsonian Institution; and *New York Times* best-selling author R.J. Palacio.

Other speakers include Joyce Epstein, director of the Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University; Christopher Lehman, author of *Pathways to the Common Core*; and Annie Murphy Paul, author of *Origins: How the Nine Months before Birth Shape the Rest of Our Lives*.

For a full list of speakers and to register for the summit, go to <http://familieslearning.org/conference.php>. To learn more about NCFL, go to <http://familieslearning.org/home.php>.